

1959 ~ **25th** ~ 1984

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THE DEMESNE LAND OF SOUTH MIMMS 1606

The demesne lands of South Mimms were situated at the NW corner of the Edmonton Hundred, adjoining North Mymms and Ridge parishes, in Hertfordshire.

I first studied a document at Hatfield House in August 1967¹. Its importance was quite evident, as it appeared to be a complete survey of the Manor of South Mimms. Unfortunately, the document has suffered the ravages of time and is not easy to interpret. It consists of a field survey of the Lord's demesne; a rental giving the landholders, messuages, etc; and their rents; an alphabetical list of tenants with page references to the rental, and, finally, details of the demesne farms, with a list of freeholders and copyholders.

At first I thought this was probably the survey taken when Robert, Earl of Salisbury, acquired the Manor of South Mimms from the executors of Andrew, Lord Windsor (d 1605). This has since been confirmed and the document dated to 1606. Also, I felt there must have been a map, as the survey was so detailed.

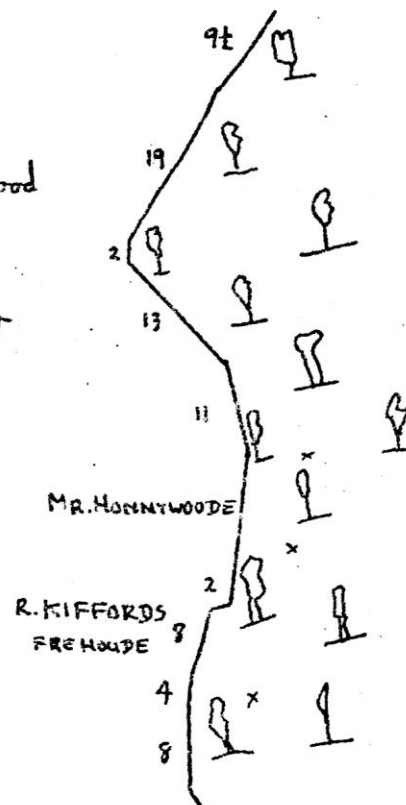
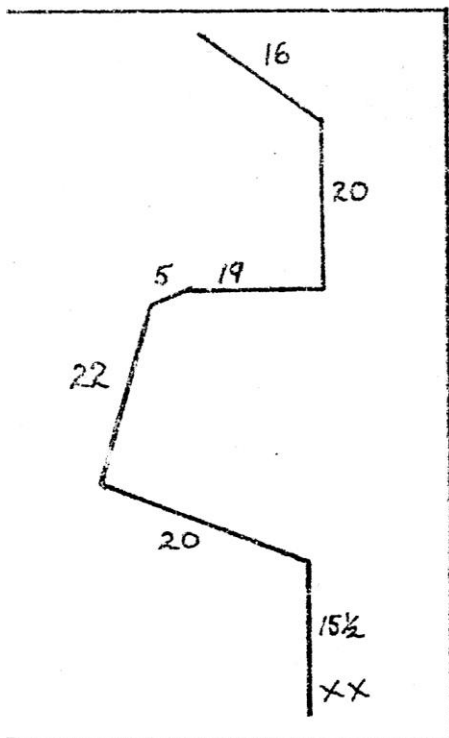
In 1977, Mr R. H. Harcourt-Williams, the librarian and archivist to the Marquess of Salisbury, first drew my attention to part of a map he had found in the archives². It was the NW portion of the Lord's demesne land. Subsequently, another very small portion of the map³ was found, which attaches to the above. For many years the numbers on the survey remained a mystery but comparison with the map showed the right-hand column to be a form of linear measurement, ie perches, and the left-hand column to be degrees.

PARSONAGE BUSHES

SURVEY

MAP

p. Bushes 30 acc. 341 + 8 } tr. liber
 350 + 4 } V. Kifforde
 9 + 8 }
 53 + 2 }
 354 + 12 } tr. Mr Honny Wood
 342 + 11 }
 301 + 13 }
 316 + 2 } grove tr. liber
 13 + 19 } Kifford
 20 + 9½ } ag grove



Using a scale of 1mm = 2 perches, I drew the distinctive features of the Lord's demesne where the map was missing and found that by comparing it with the Ordnance Survey Sheet TL20SW, scale 1:10,560, the similarity was remarkable. (see inset) The map at Hatfield House consisted of most of the lands to the west of Mimms Hall Brook, whereas most of the lands to the east of the Brook have been reconstructed from the survey.

On the surviving portion of the map the Manor House, one house in North Mymms, two barns and five gates or stiles are illustrated. The picture of the Manor House bears comparison with the front of the present house, when viewed from Warrengate Lane, looking east.

It is over 370 years since Israel Amyce, surveyor to the Earl of Salisbury, walked the fields to measure and then make up the map. It is a tribute to his accuracy that it has been possible to reconstruct the maps. From a detailed study of the survey and map, it has been possible to plot the path of the surveyor through the manor. (see diagram on p). It would appear that it took five days' work to complete the map.

<u>day's route</u>	<u>distance covered according to the</u>	
	<u>map</u>	<u>survey</u>
A to B	2miles 1247yds	2miles 1372yds
C to D	2miles 177yds	2miles 174yds
E to F	3miles 1613yds	3miles 1448yds
G to H	5miles 587yds	5miles 56yds

It has not been possible to give exact measurements for the fifth days' work in Tapperdell, because the map is incomplete and additional measurements occur on the surviving fragments of the map, which are not found in the survey.

The lower mileage on the first two days resulted from traversing undulating terrain with more intricate field boundaries. Whereas the fourth days' work was across the smooth chalklands with straight boundaries requiring fewer angular measurements.

the demesne lands

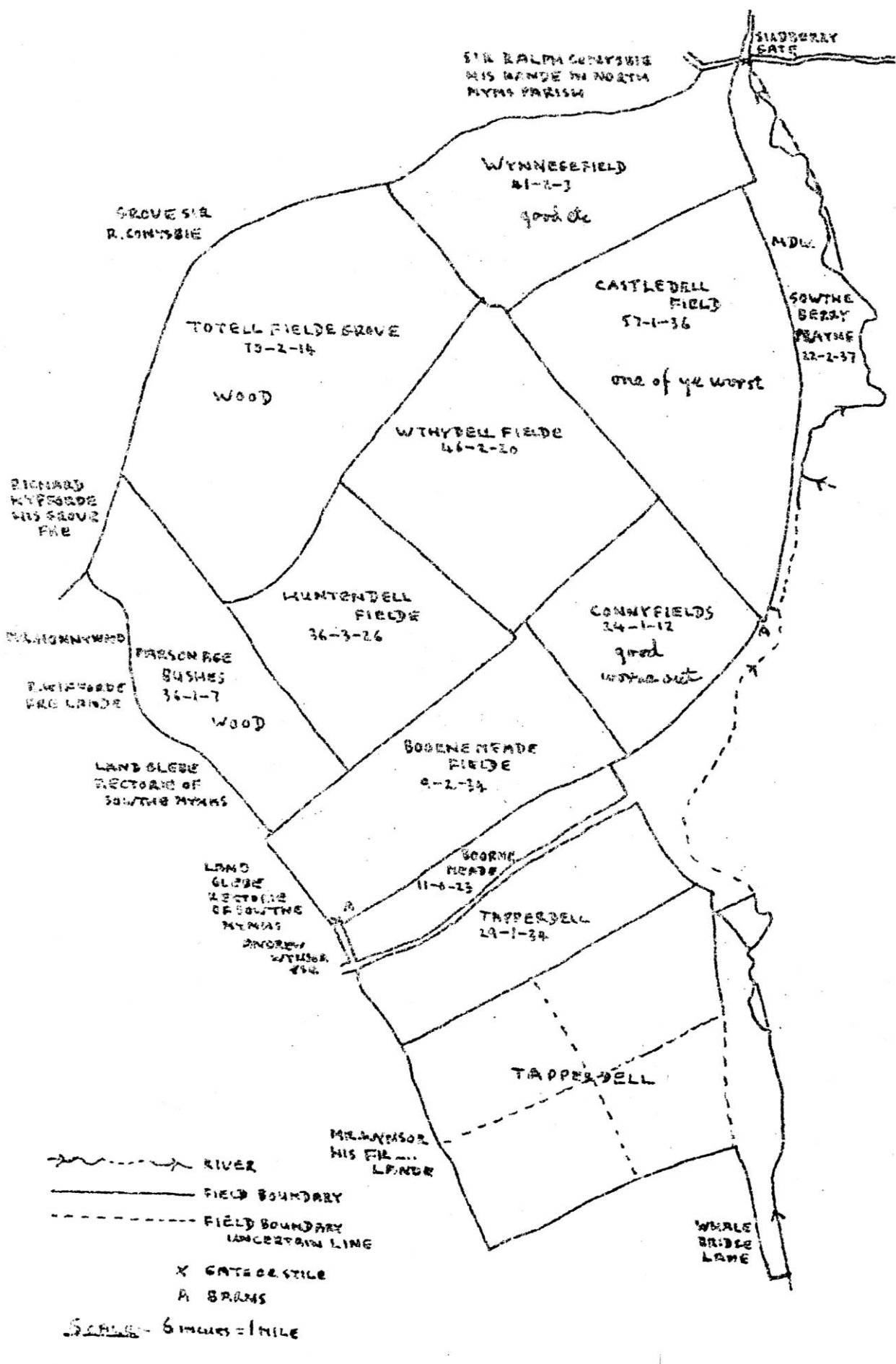
<u>Arable</u>	a r p	<u>Pasture</u>	a r p
Wynnegar field + in 2	41 2 3	The Downes now + in 2	47 2 18
Pylveges + in 3	37 0 7	Wyndmyll Hill	38 1 9
Hunte Mead Field	36 3 26	Farcke	21 1 30
Wythie Dell Field	46 2 20	Conie field	24 1 12
Tepperdell	81 2 30	Castledell Field	57 1 36
Borne Mead Filed	35 2 34	Southberry Playne	22 2 37
The Mores	31 2 14		<u>231 3 22</u>
Marzeler	43 1 32	<u>Meadow</u>	
Kings Close	10 0 4	Long Meadow	12 1 14
	<u>364 2 8</u>	Dennys Mead	4 0 0
<u>The total being</u>		Borne Meadow	3 2 11
<u>672a 3r 6p</u>		Borne Meadow	5 2 11
		Long Pittle	4 0 0
			<u>31 1 16</u>

The land was farmed by Robert Wilteshier, yeoman, who held the site of the Manor, Parck, windmill Hill, The Downs, Southberry plain, Longmeadow, Borne-meadow, Connyfield, Castledell field, Wynyge Hills, Pylveges, the Mores, Marzeler, Kings Close and Long Pittle; in toto 400a 2r 14p (actually 403-2-1) and paid £188 8s 4d yearly.

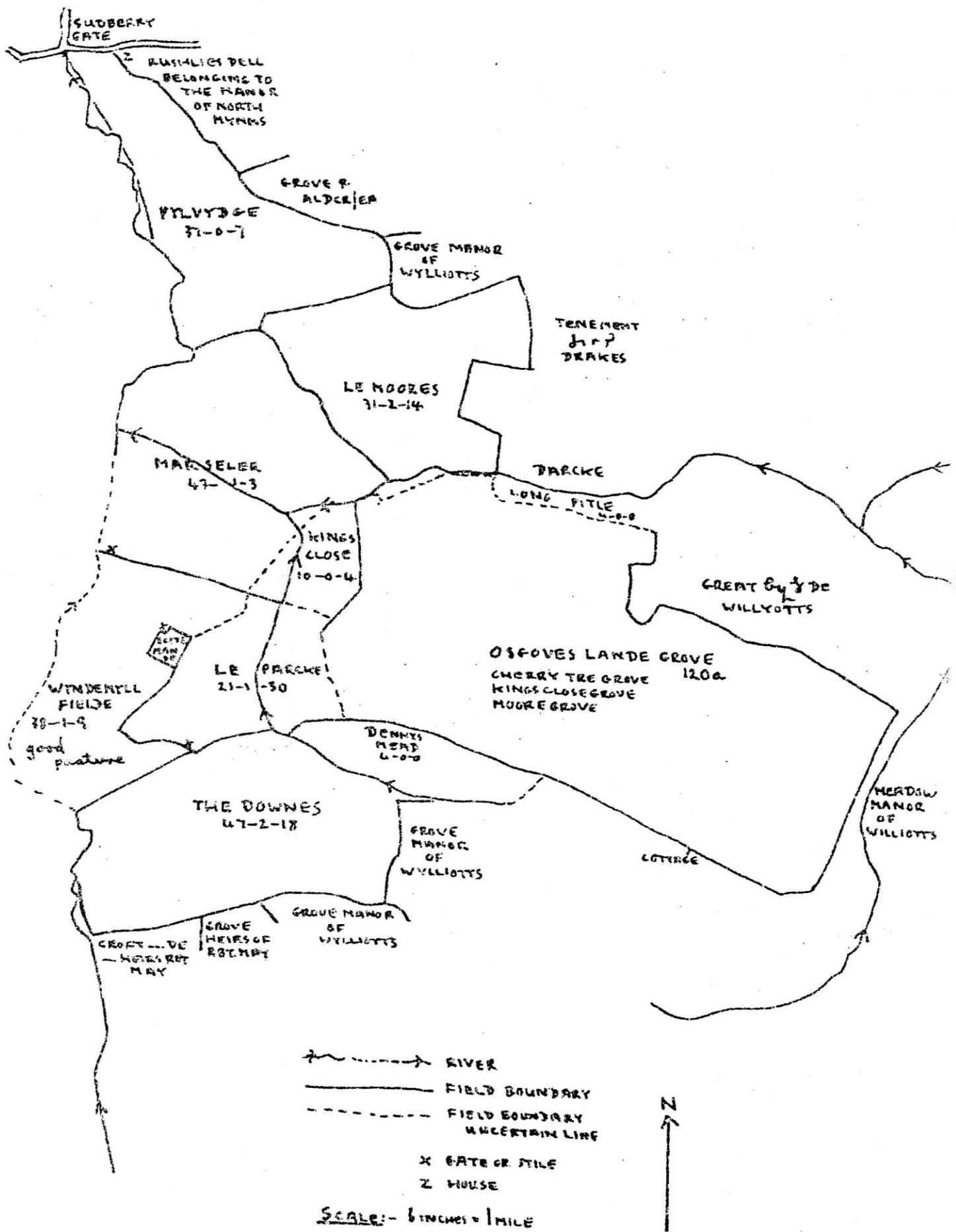
Richard Kyford, yeoman, held a Barn and farmed Borne meadow, Borne-mead, Hunte mead fylde and Wythiedell field; in toto 120a 3r 11p (actually 124-3-11) and paid £51 15s yearly.

Roger Hoddeson, yecman, held Tapperdell divided in five fields and Dennys meade; in toto 85a 2r 30p and paid £36 5s 4d yearly.

LANDS TO THE WEST OF MUSHSHALL BROOK (TAPPEDELL RECONSTRUCTED)



LANDS TO THE EAST OF MIMMSHALL BROOK (MAINLY RECONSTRUCTED).



Comparison with other deeds⁴ at Hatfield House shows the increase in conversion from pasture to tillage after Robert Cecil acquired the Manor of South Mimms in 1606.

	1597	1606	1607	1614	1624-5
Wyneger	P	A	A	A	
Castledell	P	P	A	A	
Coniefield		P	A	A	A
Pylvyges	P	A	A	A	
Marzeler	P	A	A	A	A
Kings Close		A	A	A	P
The Mores	P	A	P	P	
Southberry Plain	P	P	P	P	
Parck	P	P	P		P
Windmill Hill	P	P	P	P	P
Downes	P	P	P	P	P
Long Pitle		M	M	M	
Long Meadowe	M	M	M	M	M
Borne Meadow			M	M	

In the lease to G. Bayne in 1597, it was mentioned specifically that only Pylvydes, Marzeler and the Downes could be converted from pasture to tillage. Where there is no entry on the above table it indicates the piece of land was not mentioned in the deed.

The Demesne Woodland

All the woods had been felled and sold according to a deed c.1589⁵. The wood of Parsons Bushes and Totyll had been sold to one Page, one of Her Majesty's Officers in the Woodyard and could not be felled again for 16 years because he converted the wood to 'coales'. He was granted four years to fell and carry away the wood. Therefore the surveyor did not envisage his honour being able to sell any wood for 9 years as the oldest wood was only 3 years old, some 2, and some had only one year's growth. It was stated that 16 years would pass before the whole profit of the wood could be received and was hoped it would then sell at 60s an acre because 'for that wood groweth scarce in the country, and wood is daylie stocked up'⁶.

The demesne woodlands were often leased separately from the other lands and usually for 30 years.

In 1604 Freeman Page, Finchley, Middx and William Hall, South Mimms, gent, bought the demesne woodland for £500⁷. It consisted of:

Osgars land	120a
Toothill	64a
Parsonage Bushes	30a

In the 1606 survey they still held the woodland which was recorded as:

Osgars lande grove	}	120a
Cherrytree grove		
Kings Close grove		
More grove		
Totell Field grove		70a 2r 14p (usually 68-2-14)
Parsonage Bushesm		36 1 7
		<u>267a 1r 6p</u>

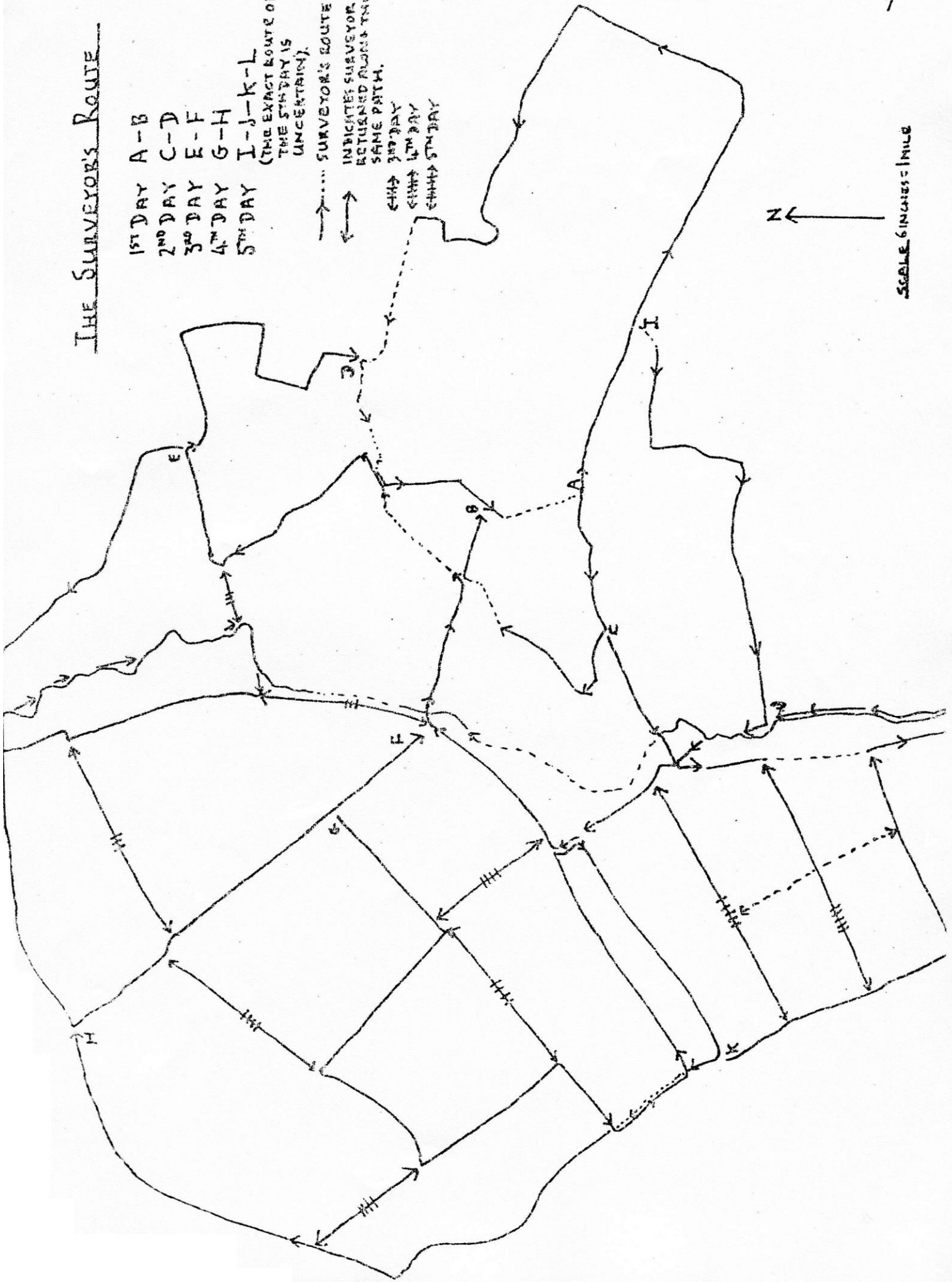
In 1598⁸ (though 1599 on the outside of the document) Osgarsland is 109a and Moorgrove, Cherrytreegrove and Kings Close 31a. The present day acreage of the area covered by Osgarsland is 122a Or 1p, so there is some confusion. If Moregrove Cherrytree grove and Kings Close grove are not part of Osgarsland, then there is no known location within the Lord's demesne.

Osgarsland is interesting as a name because it is recorded in 1638 as Osgars Wood⁹, in 1615 as Osgars land Grove¹⁰, in 1606 as Osgoves lande grove and Osgars lands¹¹, in 1598 as Hosgarland¹² and in 1594 as Husgars land¹³. It is possible that it is a corruption of the Saxon Ansgar the staller, who held South Mimms in King Edward the Confessor's time (1042-1066 AD).

THE SURVEYOR'S ROUTE

- 1ST DAY A-B
 - 2ND DAY C-D
 - 3RD DAY E-F
 - 4TH DAY G-H
 - 5TH DAY I-J-K-L
- (THE EXACT ROUTE OF THE 5TH DAY IS UNCERTAIN).

→ SURVEYOR'S ROUTE
 ↔ INDICATES SURVEYOR RETURNED ALONG THE SAME PATH.
 ←→ 3RD DAY
 ←→ 4TH DAY
 ←→ 5TH DAY



Wood was needed for repairs, in particular the bridge across Mimmshall Brook. Reference was made to Whalebridge Lane in the 1606 survey, but a year later, at the Court Baron held on 31 June⁴, it was recorded 'We most humbly pray that wale bridge and highe brige may be repaired'. Whalebridge was first mentioned in 1345⁵.

Brian Warren 1983

I wish to acknowledge my thanks to the Marquess of Salisbury for allowing access to documents concerning South Mimms at Hatfield House, and for granting permission to reproduce part of the map. I am indebted to Mr R. H. Harcourt-Williams, librarian and archivist at Hatfield House, for his help and assistance at all times, in particular for first bringing to my attention the map, without which this article would not have been written. I express my thanks to Mrs H.M. Baker for her help and assistance over many years and to Mrs M. Holland for reading and correcting the proofs; for any errors which remain I accept full responsibility.

B. W.

References

Hatfield SM: ¹ Deeds 280/10; ² General 62/5; ³ General 56/19; ⁴ Deeds 153/2 1597 date; ⁴ Deeds 280/10 1606; ⁴ Deeds 89/7 1607; ⁴ Deeds 219/1 1614; ⁴ Deeds 161/14 1624; ⁴ Deeds 162/20 1625; ⁵ 1st Earl General 66/7; ⁶ 1st Earl General 66/7; ⁷ Deeds 127/20; ⁸ General 136/2; ⁹ Deeds 169/27; ¹⁰ General 42/19; ¹¹ Deeds 280/10; ¹² General 136/2 (i); ¹³ Plan of the lands of Manor of Williotts, 1594 (Mrs H. M. Baker 1978); ¹⁴ Hatfield SM General 116/7; ¹⁵ Hatfield SM Court Roll 14/27 f1.

THE TURNPIKE ROAD TO HATFIELD (2)

A previous article traced the main road from Potters Bar towards Hatfield as far as Shepherds Way. From the earliest days of the turnpike road, and until 1859, it continued straight on from this point to Woodside, on the southern edge of Hatfield Park. Where the modern road begins to rise and bear to the right, the old road crossed a field on which houses were built in 1978, and then went straight on up the steep slope which is now woodland and across the grounds of Chancellors School. Its old course still exists as the north-south part of Bell Lane and as the lane continuous with it on the far side of the modern road at Bell Bar.

At Woodside it entered Hatfield Park; before 1784 near St Michaels (Grid Ref. 249068), and it crossed the north-south drive of Hatfield House a little south of the house, at about 237079. Then it dropped steeply to the existing lane (a private road inside the Park) at about 235081. In 1784 it was diverted to enter the Park at Grid Ref. 247066, west of the lodge gates, and this is why there is a fork in the public road, outside the Park, at 250065. It followed a track which still exists (though it is not open to the public), parallel to the magnificent drive from the lodge gates. The drive was never a public road. The old road reached the top of the hill inside the Park, 100' above the level of the present road, and then ran north to Hatfield Church along the lane already mentioned.

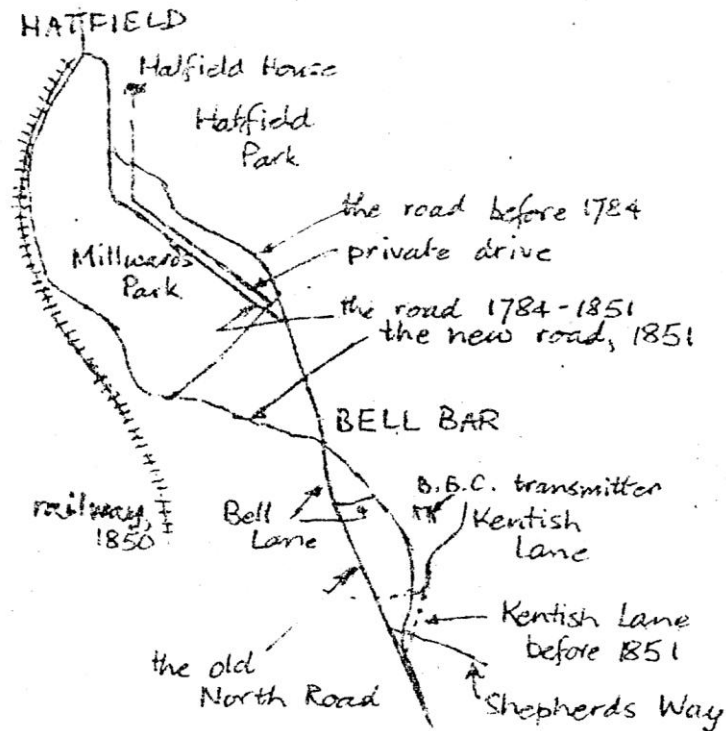
The Turnpike Trustees knew that their road was a poor one. There were steep hills, particularly in Brookmans Park and Hatfield Park, and within Hatfield Park it was overhung by trees which provided shade but also delayed the drying of the road after wet weather. As John Scott, the poet of Amwell (who was also a turnpike trustee) pointed out, 'the Error of our Climate is not Excess of Heat but Excess of Moisture'. The Trustees knew that Telford was planning a new road from London to Edinburgh, which would take a different line between Hatfield and Barnet, roughly where the Barnet By-pass runs now, thus leaving the Trust with an almost useless road to maintain. McAdam had recommended a similar route. So in 1831 the Trust asked Telford to survey a new route from Bell Bar to Hatfield, keeping outside Millwards Park (which now forms part of Hatfield Park), and it was submitted for Parliamentary approval, but opposed and not proceeded with. Probably the Trust could not have found the money to pay for it if it had been approved.

Then in November 1844 the Trust received a letter: 'Mr Gausson and Lord Salisbury communicate to the Trustees that in consequence of the great injury they were likely to experience by the passing of a railroad through Hatfield, they had entered into negotiation with the projectors of the two lines that the result of these negotiations had been an offer on the part of the Direct Northern Rail Road (Sir Jn Rennie's) to undertake to carry into effect the Improvement in the Turnpike Road which had some years since been projected by Mr Telford, at their sole expense, if the Trustees of the road expressed a wish to that effect .. from the end of the town of Hatfield to the 16 Mile Stone ... avoiding Hatfield Hill - the very severe ascent to the North East corner of Millwards Park - the descent and ascent commencing at the end of Grubs Lane and the steep hill through Bell Bar and descent to the 16 Mile Stone ... would allow the portion of the Turnpike Road between Hatfield Town and Woodside, and between the Swan at Bell Bar and the 16 Mile Stone being stopped up'. (The 16th milestone is close to Shepherds Way.)

This was a three-cornered bargain by which the railway obtained land at the western end of Millwards Park, Lord Salisbury and Mr Gausson got the road diverted out of their parks, and the Trustees got their new road. So they asked Lord Salisbury, himself a Trustee, to take charge of the negotiations. They wanted reassurance that none of the cost would fall on the Trust, and they asked for a road 30' wide, with a 6' footway and two 4' ditches, with no gradients worse than 1 in 36. In January 1846 Lord Salisbury reported that he had been in correspondence with all five companies who were proposing railways through Hatfield, and that all the necessary steps had been taken for the diversion of the road. The Trustees invited Sir James McAdam (son of the inventor of the road surface) to become their Surveyor, which he did for £90 a year, and he was to settle all details with the railway company. This company invited McAdam to be their agent in constructing the new road, and the Trustees gave their permission for him to do so. With hindsight, this was unwise: he ought not to have been simultaneously in the pay of two parties to an agreement, whose interests might be in conflict.

In December 1847 the railway company had their land, but had done little or no work on the road, and the Trustees were trying to urge them on. Then Lord Salisbury evidently began negotiating behind the scenes, for at the Trustees meeting in June 1848 the railway company offered them an £8,000 debenture if they would make the road themselves. Lord Salisbury and Mr Gausson offered to buy the debenture at face value, and Lord Salisbury offered to make the road for £8,000, employing McAdam to carry out the work. He also ceased to be a Trustee (though Mr Gausson remained one), so that he was legally free to enter into contracts with the Trust. The Trustees agreed to all this, and withdrew their demand for the 1 in 36 gradient, accepting 1 in 30 instead.

So far everything seems to have been amicable, and the Trustees were so well pleased with their bargain that they reduced the tolls on the road (an almost unheard-of step). Not until 1850 did they realise that the railway would take away most of their revenue, and raise the tolls again.



But McAdam was now under pressure from Lord Salisbury to complete the new road quickly, so that the old one could be closed. Also he had to keep the cost down, since any excess would have to be paid by Lord Salisbury. What he did was to obtain material for the new road by reducing the width of the old one from 60' to 20'. By July 1849 he was ready to divert light traffic into the new road to help consolidate it, letting coaches and waggons continue on the old one. The Trustees did not approve, and some of them, on the way home from their August meeting, found the narrowed road so dangerous that they returned to Hatfield and remonstrated with the Sub-Surveyor, recording their action in their minute book as if it had occurred at a properly-constituted meeting.

In January 1850 McAdam reported the road complete from Hatfield as far as Bell Bar. Could the Trustees now close the old road between these two points? They thought not, for the new road was not yet complete, as the Act of Parliament required, from Hatfield to the 16th milestone. This may have been a genuine fear of infringing the law, in however trivial a way (and it would have been quite in keeping with the cautious behaviour of the Trust as recorded in the minute-book), or it may have been a gesture of defiance to Lord Salisbury, who was becoming impatient. He was prepared to pay for a road 24' wide in the cutting below Bell Bar if he could close the old road by 1 March, but otherwise he would only pay for 20' width. The Trustees stood firm in asking for 24'; the original demand for 30' seems to have been abandoned by this time.

Lord Salisbury closed the old road in March, putting bars across it with his employees to guard them. The Trustees set the law in motion against Lord Salisbury, but it worked slowly. Meanwhile, Mr Gausson resigned from the Trust and in January 1851 he too was demanding that the Trustees should comply with the law - presumably by completing the new road and letting him close his part of the old one.

The Trustees now ordered McAdam to repair the road through Hatfield Park. No doubt it needed repair, though the effort would have been more usefully devoted to the new road than to the old one. McAdam probably preferred Lord Salisbury's money to that of the Trustees, and he took legal advice himself, which was that the old road now belonged to Lord Salisbury. So he refused to repair the old road, and in January 1851 the Trustees ended his employment as Surveyor. In February their case against Lord Salisbury came to trial before the Lord Chief Justice, and Lord Salisbury was found guilty of nuisance.

At this tantalising point the Trust's minute-book ends, and the rest of the story must be gathered from other sources. In August 1851 McAdam's assistant was still marking out the road into Hatfield (which is surprising, because McAdam had said in 1850 that it was completed). The high embankment at the end of Shepherds Way was made in 1851; it produced a lake by the side of Shepherds Way which may or may not have been intentional. Kentish Lane was diverted into the new road in October 1851. The Trustees had the new road through the cutting inspected by an independent surveyor in November, but he refused to certify it as fit for public use. In March 1852 the Trustees, on payment of £300 by Lord Salisbury, agreed to complete the road themselves. By December 1852 the road was finished, and the contractor sent in his bill to the Trustees, remarking in a covering letter that the road was in a 'sad dirty state', which he blamed on the surveyor for having put chalk on it.

Even now the difficulties were not over, for in January 1853 there was a landslip in the cutting, which cost £60 to clear away; and Lord Salisbury and Mr Gaussen were writing bitter letters to each other about their respective shares in the cost of fencing the new road. But it is significant of the changes brought by the railway that no newspaper reported the blocking of this main new road.

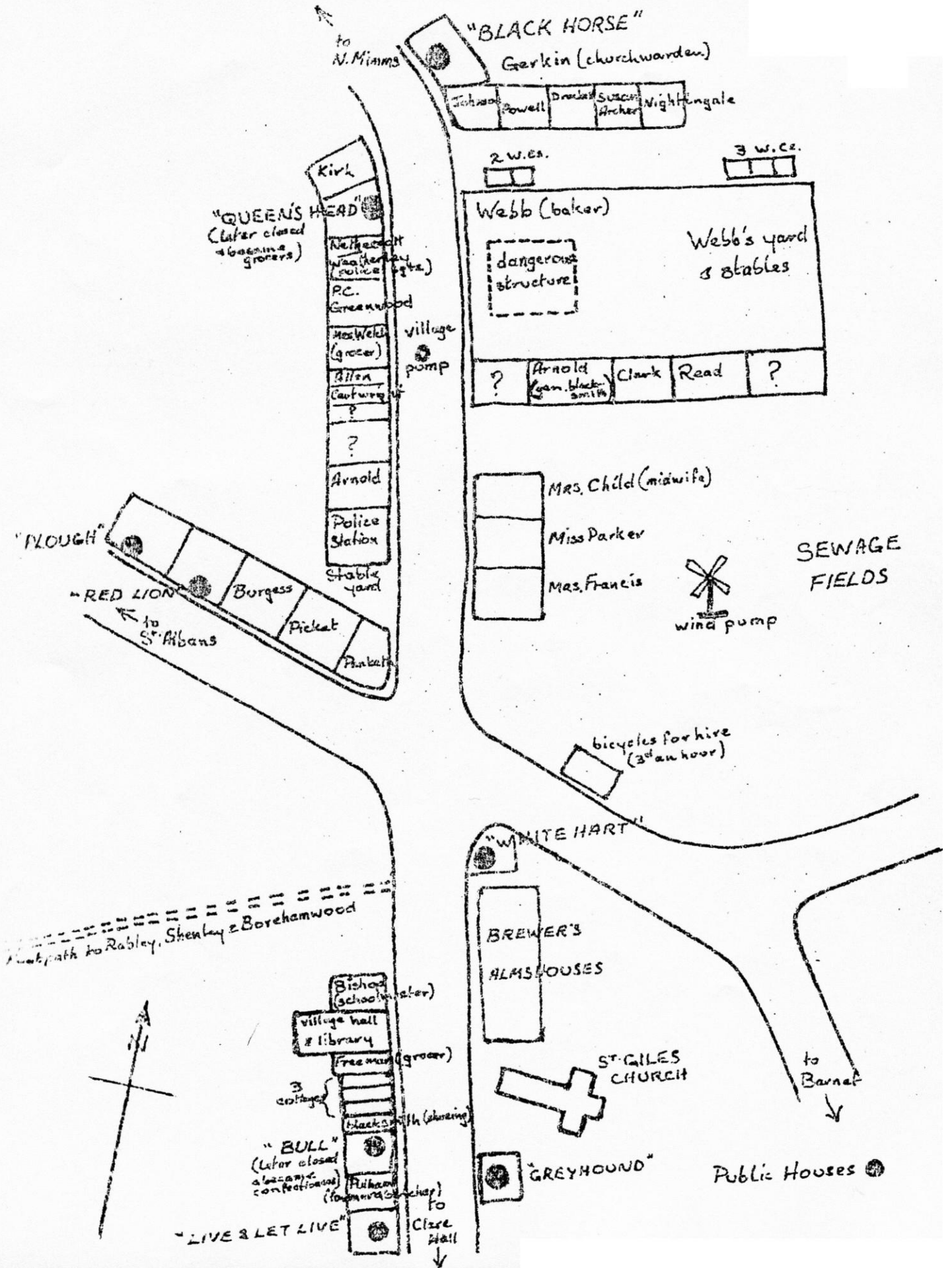
What happened to the old road northward from the 16th milestone? It still appears on the Ordnance Survey maps in 1870, and Harper, in 'The Great North Road' (written in 1900 and reissued in 1922) implies that it could still be seen. But Mr Gaussen was obviously very anxious to close it. It does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1902 with minor corrections 1913, and there is no trace of it now.

This story would have been shorter if McAdam had not been simultaneously employed by parties with conflicting interests, or if Lord Salisbury had been more patient, or if the Trustees had been less cautious about legal precision. But there is a happier ending that might have been expected, for in 1862 Lord Salisbury was once again Chairman of the Trustees, and in 1863 he was succeeded by Mr Gaussen. Meanwhile, of course, with the coming of the railway in 1850, the through traffic had vanished and only local traffic used the new road. It has the sad distinction of being the last road built for a Turnpike Trust, and probably the last main road built in England for fifty years.

A. C. Lynch

SOURCES: Minute book of the Galley Corner Turnpike Trust 1806-1851 (the earlier and later volumes have not survived), and the Trust's account book, both in the Herts CRO; letters to and from Lord Verulam, also in the Herts CRO; The Hertford Mercury, and the County Press for 8 March 1851; an advertisement in The Hertford Mercury, 16 August 1851.

All opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Potters Bar and District Historical Society either as a body or as individual members.



SOUTH MIMMS IN THE 1890s

Mrs H. M. Baker, Archivist to the Society, has received this map and accompanying reminiscence, written by Mr Cyril Powell, who died last year at the age of 94. The additional notes at the end have been provided by his sister-in-law, Mrs Powell, through whose kindness we are able to reproduce this article.

This shows what South Mimms was like when I started school - 8 public houses! Between Pulham's the farmer and Live and Let Live there was, and still is, the Post and Telegraph Office and grocer followed by six cottages on the right side of the hill and then four or five more cottages, in one of which lived Hibbert, a choir boy crippled and hunchback for life, and in another, Potter, the village postman. Then there was the school (C of E). Opposite the Village Hall were 3 cottages, of which the one next to the Vicarage was Hickman's, the confectioner. Nearly every weekend a two wheeled ambulance would be seen trundling a drunk-and-disorderly to the police station, to spend the weekend in a cell.

Most of the names I remember because the boys were choir boys; the girls were mostly good but unfortunately some were micky-takers, and one couldn't blame them, for some lived in atrocious conditions.

Once a week, on Saturdays, a fishmonger, Mr Lawrence from Potters Bar, came with his horse and cart and sold his stock of fried fish, papers &c in next to no time. Once a week a barrel organ was trundled into the village by an Italian woman and her son and never to my knowledge asked anyone for money. People put money into a tin on the organ. She owned one of the row of cottages between Alston Road and the market and sent one of her children to grammar school.

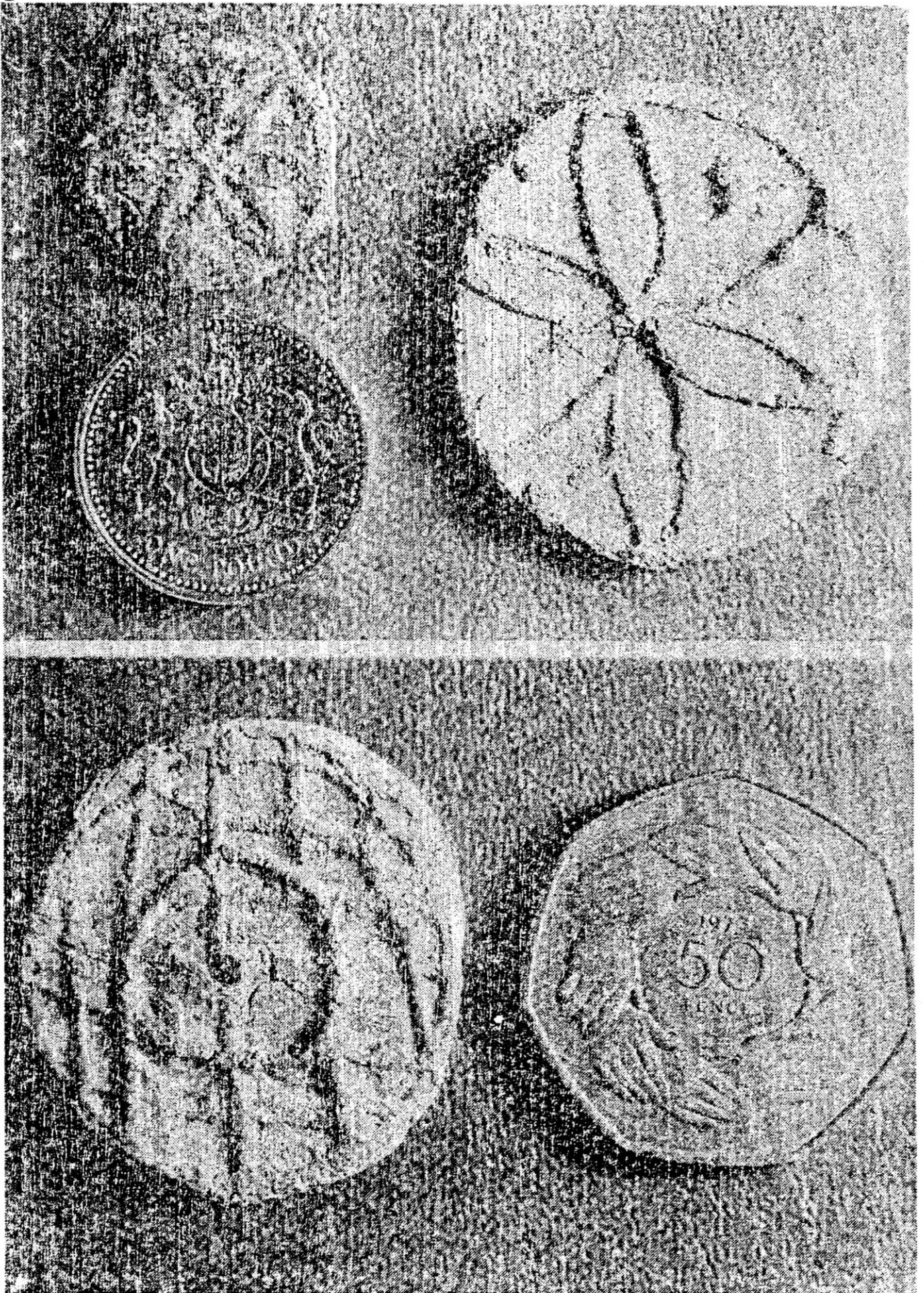
A few notes on how some of the villagers children earned a living in the 1890s and early 1900s:

My father died when I was eight, leaving my mother with six children. Girls leaving school collected together in the mornings and walked on through the village and the country lanes into Boreham Wood to a film making factory. Only girls were employed there, at 9/- a week. Others worked with their mothers in the fields picking up stones and rubbish and putting them in heaps to be cleared before the grass mowing started in June. This rubbish came out from London in truck loads to Potters Bar Station and the farmers carted it onto their land for fertiliser.

Others worked with their mothers planting potatoes about Whitsuntide, and picking them up in September, and throughout the winter sorting out the good from the bad out of the clamps in the open, with sacks round their shoulders to try and keep warm. They were lucky to earn 6/- a week. Others had to go out to find dead wood to light their fires in the morning and look after themselves: they were told they were lazy if they complained about not feeling well.

Children still at school were expected to sing the Old Hundred and All Things Bright and Beautiful before lessons in a freezing cold building. One small fire was up at one end of the school. I know because I was one of the school coal-scuttle humpers. Not for them sitting in centrally-heated supermarkets, taking money!

Cyril Powell was the eldest of six children, five boys and one girl. The Vicar of South Mimms at this time was Mr Hay. On some Sundays he took the choir boys to the Anglican convent at London Colney to sing an early service. The boys had to run behind the Vicar as he cycled along, but were rewarded with a very good breakfast afterwards! The younger village children used to work as birdscarers before they went to school in the morning. When the Village Hall was built, local residents were invited to subscribe 6d a head for bricks. Later Cinderella dances were held in the Hall - all the guests had to leave by midnight.



The example in the top left-hand corner was bought, and is shown only for comparative purposes.

LEAD TOKENS

The illustrated token was found by Mr Robinson in his garden at 45 Oakroyd Avenue, Potters Bar, earlier this year.

I am indebted to Richard Coxshall for the following information:

'Token, weight 18.6gms dia. c35mm (1 3/8"), made from lead. The token has, on its obverse, a six petalled flower enclosed within a circle. On the reverse are two concentric circles superimposed upon cross-hatching. The cross-hatching consists of six lines with five at right-angles to them. Enclosing the design is the outer of the two circles. In the centre is a dot or pellet and this is probably the mark made in the mould by the point of a compass used to describe the circles.

Tokens of this type have been found in various parts of the country. Many different designs have been recorded and it is not unusual to find one side of a token blank. Particularly common, it would seem, is the flower design which appears on many examples. The elongated, pointed petals are quite characteristic. Not all the flower designs, however, are six-petalled; five, four and three are also known.

The reverse displays a variation, also well-known. Cross-hatching and concentric circles are to be found on separate tokens as well as being superimposed. Another circular type is the wheel and as with the flower petals, the number of spokes varies.

How were they made? In the light of current evidence they all appear to have been cast. Moulds have been found made from such materials as limestone, pottery and sandstone (all soft and easily worked). Once designs had been cut into two pieces of whatever was being used the token was made by simply fixing the two together and pouring molten lead in via a small hole.

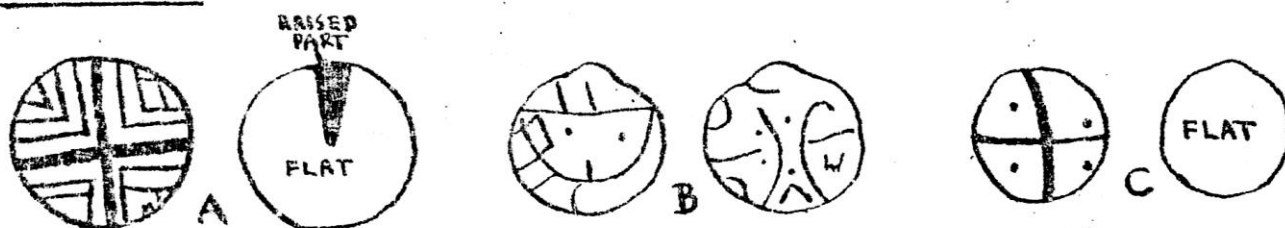
What were they used for? Well, the short answer is that nobody knows. Until further research is done their use must remain a mystery.

How old are they? Possibly as early as the 13th century up to the 19th (although I wonder whether finds from 19th century deposits are residual). Once again, much more work needs to be done before a more definite dating sequence can be established.'

Since the above find, three further tokens of an apparently similar type have been found in the vicinity of South Mimms:

Obverse first

B. Warren



Barnet Family History Society has produced an outline plan of St Mary's Churchyard and is hoping to complete a detailed plan and copy all the monumental inscriptions. If any member of the Potters Bar and District Historical Society would be interested in helping with this work, please contact a committee member. Further details will be notified later.

A Modern History of Brookmans Park, 1700-1950 by Peter Kingsford
published by North Mymms Local History Society, 55pp, £1.50

Brookmans Park as it is today bears little resemblance to the same area a hundred years ago, and half of this book is devoted, very reasonably, to the development of Brookmans Park as a series of housing estates from 1926 onwards, when the railway station was built. The earlier history is mainly an account of the landowning families of the area, particularly the Gaussens, and of their great houses. Dr Kingsford would clearly like to discuss their tenants in equal detail, but the sources are scanty. The later part of the story is full of detail of the various developers and of the constraints imposed on them by town-planning and the like.

The book is a do-it-yourself publication and thus achieves a low price, but in appearance it is of fully professional standard. Special praise must be given to the maps by Liz Holloway and Albert Thom, which are not only informative but are a pleasure to look at. The book is to be the first of a series, and it has set a standard which it will be hard to maintain. It can be highly recommended to anyone who knows something of Brookmans Park and would like to know more.

A. C. Lynch

Foot (-plate) note

Immediately prior to the opening of the Great Northern Railway from King's Cross to the North in August 1850, the Directors of the Company, invited guests and representatives of the Press travelled to Peterborough and back by special train.

In a description of the outward journey published in the Bedford Times and Bedfordshire Independent on 10 August (probably taken from The Times) mention is made of stations "decorated with laurels and flags" and "... thence to Potter's Bar where a faint attempt at firing a salute was made, though, judging by the report made, the piece of ordnance used must have been of the smallest calibre".

(Acknowledgement to Newsletter no 1 of the Great Northern Railway Society.)

G. Eve

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